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Ocean Township, NJ - After Fierce Opposition Yeshiva Proposal Withdrawn

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Published on: January 31, 2011 08:14 AM

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Ocean Township, NJ - Residents who had packed the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting room on a regular basis to oppose a proposed religious school at the manicured Copper Gables office building at the corner of Deal and Poplar roads say they are elated with the applicant's decision to withdraw the application.

"Obviously, we are very pleased," said Randi Lane resident Damian Sylvia. "I'd like to think we had something to do with it even if we didn't, but the fact of the matter is it's over."

Backlash began early.

The nonprofit Yeshiva of Ocean and its principal Rabbi Meir Miller first came before the zoning board May 12. Within a month, word began to spread that a religious school was to replace a long-standing commercial entity.

At last month's meeting, an estimated 140 people packed the meeting room.

Proposed was a conversion of the two-story, 10,000-square-foot Copper Gables commercial building, formerly a single-family home, into a mix of dormitory, classroom, study, prayer, dining hall, kitchen and apartment for its supervising director — Miller and his family.

Although parochial schools for students in kindergarten through 12th grade are permitted in the zone, a use variance was necessary for the application because students would be 18 and older, said Marianne Wilensky, township director of community development.

Students would reside, study, eat and participate in a program that would run year-round, with hours ranging from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., according to papers filed with the township. They would stay at the school from one to three years before moving on to rabbinical school or taking trips to Israel.

A series of postponements led officials to consider a special meeting or clearing a regularly scheduled meeting date to accommodate the applicant's professional testimony.

The application was to return to the board for scheduling next month.

But at the end of last week, Wilensky received a letter saying the applicant was withdrawing his proposal without prejudice, meaning he could come back before the board. However, project attorney Jennifer Krimko said she doubts her clients would do so.

The action came a week after Krimko offered a new plan with fewer students and altered designs based on board professionals' concerns. She said her client has no plan as to whether the building will remain a commercial entity or come back before the board with a different proposal.

"Personally, I don't know if it's the end of the whole thing," said lifelong resident Carolyn Cleary Franco, who lives in one of the few single-family homes on Deal Road in the immediate vicinity. "This is definitely a victory for now, and I'm happy I can still be here on this corner. I hope it keeps to the level of traffic and all the other things that could

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"I think this was the wrong location, the wrong site, the wrong scope for this community," said 16-year resident Sandy DeMarco "Obviously we are very pleased."

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1

Jan 31, 2011 at 08:25 AM

[Aron1 Says:](#)

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"I think this was the wrong location, the wrong site, the wrong scope for this community,' said 16-year resident Sandy DeMarco."
Ms. DeMarco forgot to mention "wrong religion".

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2

Jan 31, 2011 at 08:33 AM

[bamba Says:](#)

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Franco and all the others have just given up their divine protection.

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3

Jan 31, 2011 at 08:49 AM

[Ocean-Twerp NJ Says:](#)

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"Oy l'rasha oy l'shcheino..." Even if the project would have gotten the necessary approval, and all was going well, the anti-semetic neighbors would probably make false accusations against them. Be"H R' Miller and the yeshiva/beis medrash will find a new location with out all these tsoros; and may the Aibeshter exact His retribution on all those that got in the way with false intentions...Amen!

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4

Jan 31, 2011 at 09:36 AM

[AuthenticSatmar Says:](#)

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What these yeshivas need to do is incorporate as a christian sounding entity, find a priest to go before the board, and when all approvals are in place switch it to a jewish entity.

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5

Jan 31, 2011 at 09:39 AM

[Anonymous Says:](#)

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To all the comments that suggest anti-semitism:
You don't you look at it from their perspective?
How would u feel if u were living in your dream home on a nice quiet block and one day a school of 18 year olds opened up next door?
Teenagers are rowdy. By nature.



The tanks are speeding down the street past midnight. The tanks are entering by the houses at all times of the day AND night?

Be reall! Stop making et into anti-semitism. U just cheapen it
Stop having the "Al Sahrpton" mindset.

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6

Jan 31, 2011 at 10:18 AM

Miguel Says:

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Franco and all the others have just given up their divine protection.

Are you making these decisions now?
Do you take input from us mortals?

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7

Jan 31, 2011 at 10:21 AM

Anonymous Says:

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I agree with #5, you cant just assume anti-semitism. Those of us in brooklyn know cases of frum people fighting tooth and nail to keep yeshivos off their block. It wasn't about anti-semitism it was about "quality of life" and real estate prices.

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8

Jan 31, 2011 at 12:19 PM

ActualJew Says:

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A shul was blocked by neighbors in this area once who complained traffic would destroy the streets. when told that people would be walking, they complained that it would destroy the sidewalks.

not every opposition is anti Semitic. it is more NIMBY syndrome.
but then again, this is America.

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9

Jan 31, 2011 at 01:05 PM

Anonymous Says:

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Why would ANYONE want this yeshiva on their block which would become a 24x7 nuisance and reduce the quality of life in the neighborhood. It has nothing to do with anti-semitism; they would have been equally opposed to a 24x7 islamic theology school.

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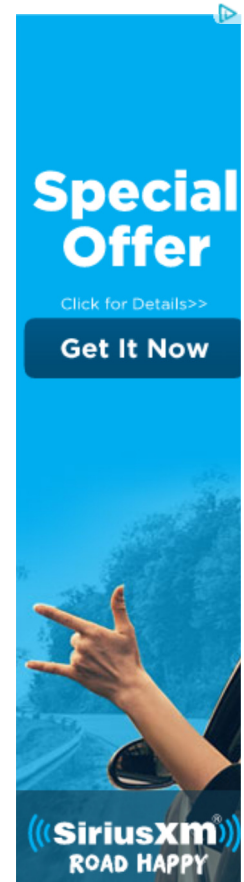
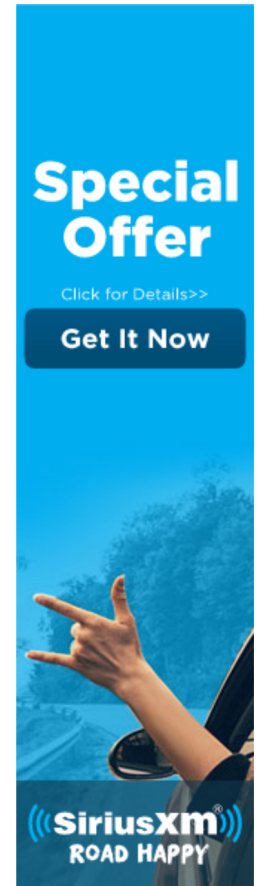
10

Jan 31, 2011 at 01:47 PM

cheeseball Says:

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to all you claiming quality of life you should know that deal rd is a major thoroughfare in the



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area it has an entrance to a major highway and in the way a quiet nice street and if you know the property is huge and wouldnt impact there quality of life at all. plus the bocherim of yeshiva deocean are very upstanding and respectful.

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11

Jan 31, 2011 at 03:29 PM

[wondering Says:](#)

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So does that mean that if the Yeshiva decides to buy up several of your neighbors' houses to create a "huge" piece of property and move in next door to you, you would be putting out the welcome sign? If yes, then maybe you should post your address for dorm Yeshivas currently looking... Most of the rest of the world would not be as welcoming - whether the school is of the same religion or not- most prefer not to have that scenario next door (esp when previously the property was commercial and could be expected to operate within certain business hours). I deal with similar issues on a regular basis ("professionally") and in my experience this is definitely universal

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